

Report to: Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 21 October 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Call-In Process

Purpose: To consider additional guidance for Members in relation to the scrutiny call-in process.

RECOMMENDATION: The committee is recommended to agree the call-in request checklist (Appendix 2) as the basis for any future scrutiny call-in requests.

1. Background Information

1.1 The Local Government Act 2000 provides for the scrutiny of decisions once they have been made but before they have been implemented. This part of scrutiny committees' wider overview and scrutiny role is generally referred to as 'call-in'.

1.2 The process that is to be followed is set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules within the County Council's Constitution. A summary of the process set out is attached at Appendix 1.

1.3 Since November 2024 there have been four call-in requests requiring the procedure to be invoked. In the course of these requests being made and responded to, a number of queries and requests for information about the process have been received from Members, indicating that they would find additional clarity and guidance beneficial. Consequently, the views of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs Group have been sought on the current process and what could be done to provide clarification and guidance.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The four call-in requests received since November 2024 have involved both People and Place Scrutiny Committees. Learning from these requests, the subsequent call-in processes and feedback from the Chairs and Vice Chairs Group indicated that the following aspects of the procedure would benefit from further clarity:

- The issues requiring consideration by Members before submitting a call-in request;
- The criteria for a valid call-in request and the advice which should be sought by Members considering a call-in request;
- The format of the request, including the information it should contain and whether it may be submitted electronically;
- Timescales, including the deadline for submitting a call-in request; and
- How an individual Member's support for a call-in request can be confirmed, whether this can be communicated on behalf of a Member and whether support can be confirmed electronically.

2.2 The Scrutiny and Audit Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs supported the provision of further written guidance for Members and recommended the development of a checklist which would navigate Members through the procedure as set out in the Constitution whilst retaining Members' ability to lead the call-in process.

2.3 The proposed checklist, which has been reviewed and endorsed by the Chairs and Vice Chairs Group, is attached at Appendix 2. The content is closely aligned to the considerations and

procedure set out in the Constitution. Some additional clarification has been included, with a view to how the Constitution should be interpreted including:

- a deadline of 4pm on the final day of the call-in window for a request to be submitted to the Deputy Chief Executive – this is to ensure there is clarity about the deadline and that requests are received during working hours;
- that each Member wishing to support a call-in request confirms this (ahead of the 4pm deadline) individually by email, for the avoidance of doubt as to whether a Member wishes to support a call-in request; and
- as requested by the Chairs and Vice Chairs Group, that Members considering a call-in request should inform their group leader (where relevant) to support a role for group leaders, as well as officers, in communications and advice on a potential call-in, particularly where the grounds are less clear.

2.4 The checklist will be made available on the councillors' intranet area, or by email or hard copy on request, and can be completed electronically.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendations

3.1 Learning from recent call-in requests and feedback from the Scrutiny and Audit Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group has indicated that additional guidance and clarity in relation to the call-in process would be beneficial. Governance Committee is therefore recommended to agree the checklist at Appendix 2 as the basis for the submission of future call-in requests.

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Local Member: All

Background Documents: None